



Los Ancianos: Seniors Serving Seniors
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2013-2014

Phoenix, Arizona

Federal Legislative District(s): 3-9

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

Congressional District(s): 3-9
State Legislative District(s): 4-23
Service Area by County/City: Maricopa
Project Federal Share: \$73,150
Project Local Match: \$35,302
Community Volunteers Recruited: 25
Volunteer Hours Served: 566.5
Value of Volunteer Hours: \$11,375.32
*2011 Independent Sector Rate for the Value of a Volunteer Hour in Arizona is \$20.08

Community Need

Due to significant funding cuts, hundreds of homebound older adults and adults with disabilities have been placed on a growing waiting list for services that can make the difference between their ability to remain independent at home or be forced to move to long-term care facilities. Additionally, a recent needs assessment conducted by the Area Agency on Aging, Region One identified an ongoing need for health promotion services targeted to accessing and maintaining the health and independence of older adults. Surveys of older adults in Maricopa County reveal alarming findings related to weight and obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and mortality rates due to falls. The goal of the program is to improve the health and quality of life of older adults in Maricopa County through two approaches: 1) by providing basic in-home services to homebound individuals, and 2) by creating "wellness centers" at 8 senior centers throughout Maricopa County.

National Priority Area and Program

Performance Goals:

Focus 1 - Healthy Futures: The Los Ancianos AmeriCorps Program strives to improve the health of 80 senior center attendees at risk for chronic disease in at least one health measure and provide in-home services to enable at least 300 individuals who are at risk of institutionalization to live independently longer.

Program Activities

AmeriCorps members, 55+ and volunteers who are trained and assigned to the Agency to provide new or enhanced services in clients' homes and in senior centers. Members and volunteers work within Senior centers that serve primarily rural, minority, and/or low income populations. Services and activities include friendly visits and phone contact, light housekeeping, grocery shopping, and coordination of needed transportation. Through collaboration with local hospitals, AmeriCorps members and other volunteers help recently discharged patients avoid readmission by providing services such as prescription pick-up and ensuring that follow-up doctor appointments have been scheduled. Additionally, members and other volunteers are trained to facilitate health promotion and educational activities that include a variety of health screenings and implementation of evidenced-based programs at newly created "wellness centers" at 8 senior centers in Maricopa County. Innovative activities, such as Health Rhythms Drumming and Singin' in the Rain: Strategies for Happiness have also been introduced.

Partnerships

In addition to federal, state, and local government entities, the Area Agency on Aging, Region One partners with more than 65 subcontracted agencies to provide nearly 60 programs and services to residents of Maricopa County. Specifically, the Los Ancianos AmeriCorps project partners include the following senior centers: Escalante, Gila Bend, Gilbert, Glendale, North Tempe, Salvation Army, Wickenburg and YWCA.

Program Impact

Through the Los Ancianos AmeriCorps project, homebound adults receive services that can help them remain living independently in their own homes, and "wellness center" participants have the opportunity to improve their health through the activities provided at the senior centers. Los Ancianos also provides AmeriCorps members and volunteers with an enriching and rewarding experience by offering the opportunity to provide services that will enhance the health and quality of life of older adults. During the 2012-2013 program year, AmeriCorps members and volunteers provided fitness programs to 116 individuals that were pretested to determine their health measurement; 69 of those individuals attended at least 80% of the scheduled fitness classes, and of those 65 showed an increase in a health measurement during their post fitness assessment. Additionally, 100% or 68 individuals that attended nutrition programs reported an increasing understanding of healthy diet choices and reflected improved eating habits.



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Mission

"The Area Agency on Aging, Region One is a non-profit organization that advocates, develops and delivers essential services to enhance the quality of life for older adults, persons with disabilities, people with HIV/AIDS, and caregivers."

Vision

"To be the recognized community leader that connects older adults, persons with disabilities, people with HIV/AIDS, and caregivers with a wide variety of services that promote maximum independence, choice and dignity."

History

The Area Agency on Aging, Region One is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, established in 1974, that plans, coordinates, develops, funds, administers, and delivers services and programs for five client populations: adults 60 years of age and older; adults aged 18 and older with disabilities and long-term care needs; adults aged 50 and older with special needs; family caregivers; and persons aged 18 and older who have HIV/AIDS. Hundreds of dedicated volunteers and professionals throughout the community collaborate with the Agency to deliver home and community-based services: operate senior centers; provide information, assistance and education; protect elder rights; and offer older worker and volunteer opportunities. The Agency earned accreditation from the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services in 2006 and was re-accredited in 2010 for four more years. In 2008, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging selected the Agency from among 629 area agencies nationwide to receive its top award for leadership as an Innovator in Aging Programs. In 2012 the Los Ancianos program received a National Innovation Award from the N4a. The Agency has a long and enduring relationship with National and Community Service programs. The Maricopa Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), part of Senior Corps, began under the auspices of the Agency in June, 1993 and now has 40+ stations and close to 400 volunteers.

Program Impact (continued)

One member, Phyllis, relates that she had to give up her job due to chronic illness when she heard about the AmeriCorps program. She had been lying around, watching TV and it was getting old. She was used to being active, so she decided to apply for the program. She was impressed with the wonderful group of men and women in the program, how well they got along, and how each time someone left it felt like a family member left. She has transported some beautiful elderly people, performed other volunteer services and felt the gratitude of the recipients. She has attended many classes which have been helpful in her work as well as the management of her own disability. She says that many days it is difficult for her to get out of bed so she understands the struggles of her clients, but knowing that she is there for them keeps her going. She states, "I believe, had I not been a part of this program, I would still be watching re-runs."

Stephen, a senior center director relates the following. "After the Los Ancianos Wellness Program commenced I experienced for the first time seniors who were excited and committed to coming to exercise classes. In the past they had been more committed to bingo and, where they were only half engaged, they are now fully engaged in wellness activities. There has been an attitude shift, a change in demeanor. Exercise has become the central focus and everything else is scheduled around that. People are happier, more energetic and spirits are lifted. The atmosphere is more welcoming; the center participants have come together with a sense of camaraderie. They take ownership of what they come here for. They come here for the fun of it and experience the health benefits as a result. I have noticed better balance, more mobility, more pleasant demeanors, and a spring in the step of those who are dedicated to the program."

Survey results show high satisfaction with both in-home services and wellness activities. Ninety-five percent of regular fitness and health education classes showed improvement in at least one health measure. Exercise improves brain function. Screenings for depression showed a 36% improvement with those diagnosed with depression. Seniors are not only feeling better physically and mentally, but emotionally, as well. With this comprehensive approach, our seniors are experiencing greater longevity and overall better quality of life.

